

# IX. Summary of Recommendations

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## II. RAPID ASSESSMENT

## III. RAPID RESPONSE

## IV. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

## V. PROPOSED OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

### I. SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF EARLY WARNING: EARLY DETECTION, REPORTING, IDENTIFICATION, VOUCHERING, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

#### - Early Detection And Reporting.

- **Early Detection Program.** *Establish a pilot Early Detection Program in a few key states.*
- **Network Coordination.** *Designate a State Early Detection Coordinator in each participating state.*

#### - Identification And Vouchering.

- **State and Regional Herbaria.** *Establish a network of cooperating state and regional herbaria to assist in development of state early detection networks and to serve a conduit for information into regional and national databases..*

#### - General Recommendations.

- **Standards and Protocols.** *Develop standards for early detection and protocols for reporting.*
- **Use of Existing Infrastructures.** *The system should use existing infrastructures at all levels where possible (eg., county agents, heritage network, native plant societies, weeds science societies, rangers, herbaria).*
- **Public Awareness and Support.** *Promote early detection and reporting. Public understanding of the need for prevention through early detection and rapid response is critical.*
- **Quality Assurance/Quality Control.** *Develop methods for quality assurance and quality control for all aspects of the system and the data entered into it.*
- **Information Management.** *Establish a distributed web-based information network for invasive plants. It is critical to establish a 'one stop shopping' gateway for access to all of the websites that contain information about invasive plants.*

[TOP](#)

## **II. RAPID ASSESSMENT. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION.**

### **- National Coordination.**

*- Designate a National Weed Assessment Coordinator within the Department of the Interior.*

### **- Regional Coordination.**

*- Select Regional Weed Assessment Coordinators to facilitate rapid assessments in each region of the Country.*

### **- Statewide Coordination.**

*- Select a Statewide Weed Assessment Coordinator to lead each Statewide Weed Assessment Coalition and make sure assessments are conducted according to established guidelines.*

*- Develop a Statewide Weed Assessment Coalition under each State Invasive Species Council/State Weed Team to conduct rapid assessments of new invasive plants.*

*- Provide training to Rapid Assessment and Rapid Response Group members with simulations and field trials.*

### **- Standards For Rapid Assessment.**

*- Develop protocols, criteria, and standards for use in conducting rapid assessments (what we must know and why we must know it in order to trigger a rapid response action). Monitoring and follow up will be an important part of any rapid assessment plan.*

### **- Information Management.**

*- Develop a web based distributed information system that provides readily accessible information needed to assess and rapidly respond to a new invader. Such a system would ultimately contain a baseline line of information on all documented invasive species that occur in the nation.*

**TOP**

### **III. RAPID RESPONSE.**

#### **- National Coordination.**

- Develop a National Association of Statewide Invasive Species Councils.*
- Develop criteria and protocols for implementation of a Rapid Response Plan that utilizes recommendations from the Statewide Rapid Assessment Group.*

#### **- Regional Coordination.**

- Select a Regional Rapid Response Coordinator to work with the Statewide Rapid Response Coordinators, and to serve as a liaison with the National Early Warning Coordinator.*

#### **- Statewide Coordination.**

- Develop Statewide Invasive Species Councils within each state.*
- Establish a Statewide Rapid Response Committee under the Statewide Council.*
- Select a Statewide Rapid Response Coordinator to Chair the Statewide Rapid Response Committee.*

#### **- Funding.**

- Establish a central fund under the National Council for rapid assessment and rapid response initiatives.*

#### **- General Recommendations.**

- The Statewide Rapid Response Group will take action against new invasive plants that is based on the recommendations of the Statewide Rapid Assessment Group.*
- Rapid Response initiatives should be modeled after fire response and FEMA initiatives.*
- Make all decisions for rapid response at the lowest level possible, beginning with the landowner, followed by county, state, national levels. This includes on the ground action as well as requests for funding.*
- Notify surrounding land managers when a new invasive plants has been documented.*
- After a control project has been initiated, develop a public awareness campaign to enlist public help in monitoring known populations and in detecting new ones.*

**TOP**

#### **IV. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.**

##### **- New Outreach Strategies.**

- *Develop a National Awareness Strategy for empowerment of and involvement of key partners.*
- *Develop a media campaign to raise general awareness of the problem, and provides early alerts on new invasive plants.*
- *Establish Invasive Plant Outreach Groups at the National, State, and Local Level to help raise awareness of specific groups as well as the general public.*

##### **- New Educational Resources.**

- *Identify information resources on invasive plants in both electronic and non-electronic form.*
- *Develop educational resources that target specific audiences, assess what information is available about a particular invasive species issue or problem, and that create a template for information transfer.*
- *Develop educational materials that can be used as outreach multipliers such as continuing education credits for teachers, libraries, and reviewed curricula packages for K-12, sport/recreation retailers, horticultural plant distributors, and etc.*
- *Develop efficient ways to make information accessible and useful in all directions from messengers to recipients and back.*

##### **- New Outreach Programs.**

- *Create new programs such as Adopt-A-Highway Weed Teams, National Weed Survey (like the Audubon Bird Survey), Local Weed Spotters, new Girl/Boy Scout Merit Badges, seminars for journalists and realtors, youth awareness programs, and etc.*
- *Sponsor science fair projects, internships, and development of introductory short courses on invasive plants.*
- *Develop volunteer programs to assist agencies in survey and management of new invasive plants.*

##### **- Early Alerts.**

- *Develop an Early Alert System with sample wanted posters, flyers, canned talks for downloading and for other media.*
- *Develop an Early Alert Website with games and quizzes.*
- *Develop a network for rapid distribution of early alert materials through grocery stores, libraries, parks, garden centers, and etc.*
- *Identify all people and organizations from local to international level who can serve as early detectors and messengers. E.G., extension agents, farmers, amateur botanists, PTAs, libraries, schools, colleges and universities.*

## **V. PROPOSED OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK.**

### **- National Coordination.**

- *Hire a National Early Warning Coordinator for Invasive Plants ... soon.* Developing an effective National Early Warning and Rapid Response System for Invasive Plants will require a full time, energetic coordinator to bring together the various groups needed to make this concept a reality.
- *Designate a National Weed Assessment Coordinator within the Department of the Interior.*
- *Facilitate the development of a coordinated framework for interagency cooperation at the local, state, regional, national, and international level.* Promote the establishment of State Invasive Species Councils, State Weed Teams, and Local Weed Management Areas throughout the country.
- *Elevate the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) to the status that is now held by the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force.*
- *Develop a National Association of Statewide Invasive Species Councils.*

### **- Regional Coordination.**

#### **- Early Detection and Information Management.**

- *Establish a network of cooperating regional herbaria to assist in development of state early detection networks and to serve as a conduit for information into regional and national databases..*

#### **- Rapid Assessment.**

- *Select Regional Weed Assessment Coordinators to facilitate rapid assessments in each region of the Country.*

#### **- Rapid Response.**

- *Select a Regional Rapid Response Coordinator to work with the Statewide Rapid Response Coordinators, and to serve as a liaison with the National Early Warning Coordinator.*

### **- Regional Technical Support.**

- *Establish Regional Interagency Technical Support Teams under the leadership of the National Early Warning Coordinator to provide on site and distant technical support in weed prevention and eradication projects, including rapid assessments and rapid response activities.*

### **- Statewide Coordination.**

#### **- Interagency Cooperation.**

- *Develop Statewide Invasive Species Councils within each state.*
- *Designate a Statewide Weed Coordinator to facilitate the work of the State Weed Team, under the Statewide Invasive Species Council.*

#### **- Early Detection.**

- *Designate a State Early Detection Coordinator in each participating state.*

#### **- Rapid Assessment.**

*- Select a Statewide Weed Assessment Coordinator to lead each Statewide Weed Assessment Coalition and make sure assessments are conducted according to established guidelines.*

*- Develop a Statewide Weed Assessment Coalition under each State Invasive Species Council/State Weed Team to conduct rapid assessments of new invasive plants.*

**- Rapid Response.**

*- Establish a Statewide Rapid Response Committee under the Statewide Council.*

*- Select a Statewide Rapid Response Coordinator to Chair the Statewide Rapid Response Committee.*

**- Authority Issues.**

*- Utilize the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) as a tool in facilitating rapid assessment and rapid response to new invasive plants.*

*- Develop a system for emergency herbicide approval for incipient infestations not otherwise covered by existing labels.*

**- Funding.**

*- Establish a no-year national contingency fund for use in partnering with state and local groups to conduct rapid assessment and rapid response initiatives.*

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